

R E M A R K S

Claims 1-27 are currently pending in the application. New claims 29 and 30 are presented for consideration.

Claims 1-20 are currently allowed.

Claim 1 has been amended to simply clarify language without changing the scope of the claim.

Claim 22 stands objected to as depending from a rejected base claim. Claim 22 has been rewritten in independent form so as to be allowable.

Claims 21, 23, 25 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0151251 (Barnoff). Claims 21, 23, 24, 26 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,673,751 (Finch). Claim 24 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Barnoff.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 21 and 23-27, and favorable consideration of new claims 29 and 30 are requested.

The Examiner's rejection based on Barnoff is not understood. Among other things, claim 21 recites that the relative movement of the first and second tubular elements around the first and second axes causes the first and second connecting assemblies to cooperate to draw the first and second portions axially towards each other. The relative rotational movement that is permitted between the elements in Barnoff does not cause any relative axial movement in the manner claimed. Barnoff does not suggest such an arrangement.

Claim 21 has been amended to eliminate the tapering requirement and additionally to recite the step of relatively axially moving the first and second tubular elements from the preassembly state towards each other into a third relative axial position that is different than the first or second relative axial positions. Claim 21 is further amended to recite a step, with the first and second tubular elements in a third relative axial position, wherein the first and second tubular elements are relatively rotated into a third relative rotational position wherein the frictional force generated between the radially inwardly and outwardly facing surfaces is different than the frictional force generated between the radially inwardly and outwardly facing surfaces resulting from the tubular elements changing from the first relative axial position and first relative rotational position into the second relative rotational position.

Among other things, Finch does not allow the allegedly corresponding tubular elements to be placed in different relative axial positions and relatively rotated as claimed. Finch does not suggest structure through which this might be accomplished. Accordingly claim 21 is believed allowable.

Claims 23, 24 and 25 each depends from claim 21 and recites further significant detail to further distinguish over the art applied by the Examiner.

Claim 29 depends from claim 21 and includes the tapered surface limitation eliminated from claim 21, as currently presented.

With respect to claim 26, Applicant respectfully submits that this claim is not anticipated by, or made obvious from, either Barnoff or Finch.

Among other limitations, claim 26 recites that the first and second tubular elements are selectively positionable in first and second different relative axial positions wherein they can be relatively rotated to produce a different relationship.

Barnoff has only one relative axial position between the two allegedly corresponding tubular elements, wherein relative rotation can occur. Through this relative rotation the elements are not drawn axially towards each other as recited.

Similarly, Finch has a corresponding number of channels 6 and lugs 9, which thereby precludes relative rotation in other than a single axial relationship between the allegedly corresponding tubular elements.

Accordingly, claim 26 is believed allowable.

Claim 27 characterizes the first and second tubular elements as positionable in a first relative axial position wherein they can be relatively rotated to draw the first and second portions axially towards each other.

As noted above, Barnoff does not teach or suggest this relationship.

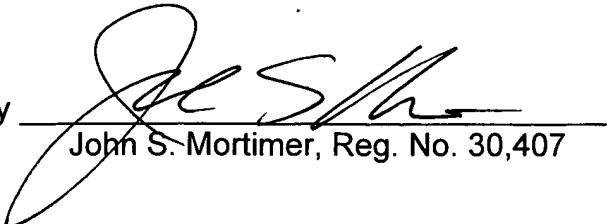
Claim 27 also recites circumferentially facing surfaces on the first and second connecting assemblies that confront each other to block movement of the first and second tubular elements from the second relative rotational position back into the first relative rotational position.

Finch is devoid of any such structure. Instead, a separate key element 11 is required to be put in place to block such movement.

New claim 30 corresponds to claim 22, and is rewritten in independent form, but without requiring the taper.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 21 and 23-27, favorable consideration of new claims 29 and 30, and allowance of the case are requested. The additional claim fee of \$250.00 is enclosed. Should additional fees be required in connection with this matter, please charge our deposit account No. 23-0785.

Respectfully submitted,

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